REMARKS

Claims 20, 21, 23-25, 27, 28 and 32-39 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 20, 23, 25 and 34 have been amended, and claims 22 and 26 have been canceled. Claim 20 is independent. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Amendment

The subject matter of claim 26 and intervening claim 22 have been incorporated into claim 20. Thus, no new matter is added.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

An Information Disclosure Statement with Form PTO-1449 was filed in the above-captioned patent application on September 3, 2009. Applicants have not yet received from the Examiner a copy of the Form PTO-1449 initialed to acknowledge the fact that the Examiner has considered the disclosed information. The Examiner is requested to initial and return to the undersigned a copy of the Form PTO-1449.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

The Office Action rejects claims 20-39 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Claim 20 has been amended in the August 17, 2009 Amendment After Final Rejection to obviate the rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 20-39 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,749,970 to Fukuta et al. ("Fukuta") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,728,539 to Gane. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 20 recites, *inter alia*, "the sheet-like elastic body has a thickness of 1-5 mm and a width of 1-10 mm" and "a following mechanism which drives the smoother following the outer periphery of the pedestal and/or the cam so that the smoother is disposed

at a given position with respect to the outer peripheral surface of the pillar structure." The applied references fail to teach or render obvious the recited features of independent claim 20.

A. The Applied References Fail To Teach Or Render Obvious That The Sheet-Like Elastic Body Has A Thickness Of 1-5 mm And A Width of 1-10 mm

The Advisory Action asserts that Gane recognizes the criticality of the thickness and width of the elastic body. In particular, the Advisory Action asserts that Gane teaches that the flexible blade should be constructed and mounted so that when it is in contact with a web of cellulosic material, its free edge flexes sufficiently to be tangential to the web at the point of contact. Also, the Advisory Action asserts that Gane teaches that the flexible blade should be mounted in a manner so that it applies enough pressure to limit the weight of the wet paper coating composition so that it is allowed to pass beneath the flexible blade. However, the above asserted criticality, even if true, is irrelevant to the criticality of the features recited in the independent claims of the present application.

In particular, when the thickness and width of the elastic body falls within the recited ranges of the present application, low peeling of the pillar structure occurs and the area of partial uncoating is minimal, which are desirable. Thus, the criticality of the features is related to minimizing the peeling and the cracking of the outer peripheral surface.

On the other hand, the asserted criticality recognized by Gane is related to the application of cellulosic material. The asserted criticality of Gane would result in an optimal range for the thickness and width of the elastic body different from the recited range of the present application. Gane discloses that the flexible blade 5 has a thickness of 0.16 mm with a length of 16 mm of the blade, which falls outside the recited range. Thus, the criticality of Gane would have led one of ordinary skill to a thickness and a length outside the recited range.

Thus, Gane fails to teach or render obvious the sheet-like elastic body has a thickness of 1-5 mm and a width of 1-10 mm. Fukuta fails to cure the deficiencies of Gane.

B. The Applied References Fail To Teach Or Render Obvious A Following Mechanism Which Drives The Smoother Following The Outer Periphery Of The Pedestal And/Or The Cam So That The Smoother Is Disposed At A Given Position With Respect To The Outer Peripheral Surface Of The Pillar Structure

The applied references do not disclose or render obvious the features added to the claims. For example, in the present application, the following means 14 is allowed to move in parallel in a given direction along the outer peripheral shape of the pillar structure 1 upon rotation of the pillar structure 1 while being slightly pressed against the outer peripheral of the cam by the force of the spring. See Fig. 4 and page 17, lines 17-28 of the specification.

Since the following means 14 moves together with the supplying and coating means 12 and the smoothing means, the distance between the supplying and coating means 12 and the smoothing means 10 and the outer peripheral surface 1a of the pillar structure 1 can be kept constant (with respect to the elastic body 10b, the state of contact between the elastic body 10b and the outer peripheral surface 1a can be kept constant). See page 18, lines 3-10 of the specification.

Therefore, even when the pillar structure 1 is disposed at a slant, the elastic body 10b can contact with the whole outer peripheral surface 1a of the pillar structure 1 in the axial direction of the columnar body 1. Thus, the coating can also be inhibited from partial uncoating or peeling of the coating. See page 17, lines 9-13 of the specification.

In view of above, claim 20 is amended to recite "a following mechanism which drives the smoother following the outer periphery of the pedestal and/or the cam so that the smoother is disposed at a given position with respect to the outer peripheral surface of the pillar structure." Also, claim 27 recites "wherein the following mechanism has first and second following rollers which are disposed at a given distance from each other and move

backward and forward following the outer periphery of the cam while contacting with the outer periphery of the cam together with the supplying and coating mechanism and the smoother, and the first and second following rollers are disposed so that the angle formed by a straight line passing through the centers of the respective rollers and a tip portion of the smoother is a given angle." Fukuta fails to teach or render obvious a following mechanism which drives the smoother following the outer periphery of the pedestal and/or the cam so that the smoother is disposed at a given position with respect to the outer peripheral surface of the pillar structure. Gane fails to cure the deficiencies of Fukuta.

Accordingly, the applied references fail to teach or render obvious the recited features of independent claim 20.

The dependent claims are patentable at least due to their dependence on allowable independent claim 20 and for the additional features they recite.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 20, 21, 23-25, 27, 28 and 32-39 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Obert H. Chu
Registration No. 52,744

JAO:OHC/lmf

Attachments:
Petition for Extension of Time
Request for Continued Examination

Date: September 28, 2009

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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